

up the next generation of skilled workers, workers like Megan Widmer and Katie Barker. These two young ladies are active in the Anaconda Job Corps and they are here today with Ray. I want to thank them for their dedication to Montana.

With additional resources, we can ensure the Anaconda Job Corps and programs like it expand, create good paying jobs, and meet the needs of local industry with well-trained local workers.

But these types of community partnerships should not just be limited to Job Corps—we need to look at our education system and ensure it is creating a workforce that meets Montana's needs. Our two-year colleges are the key. That's why as part of Employ Montana, we need to give our community colleges the resources they need to develop the talent our employers are asking for. Because of our investment in education, a kid from Columbia Falls can go down to Flathead Community College, join its culinary program, and start a restaurant in Whitefish. And a young woman from Terry can travel southwest to Miles City Community College, enroll in its Commercial Driver's License course, and learn to drive an 18-wheeler hauling grain up to the Port of Raymond. We can work together to build on the success of our community colleges and expand our job training programs so that our workforce is ready to answer the call. Investing in our education is an investment in Montana's future.

Developing our human resources is critically important to a strong economy. But in Montana we have an incredible supply of natural resources as well. Included in Employ Montana is a plan to responsibly develop an all-of-the-above energy strategy. I plan to introduce the Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage Act, which will incentivize investment in the use of carbon capture technology. This legislation will provide tax credits to allow for Montana companies to burn coal cleaner and create good paying jobs.

But we can't ignore the fact that our climate is changing. This isn't a tree hugging issue; it's a jobs issue, and it's a food security issue. Montana's number one industry, agriculture, will lose profits and be more dependent on the federal government to pay the bills if we don't start taking proactive steps to protect our clean air and water. This is Montana's Constitutional right.

So I hope you will join me in supporting Employ Montana. From stronger infrastructure, to better broadband, increased start up grants and access to capital. From strengthening workforce programs and tapping our energy economy—Employ Montana will create high paying jobs and an economy we are proud of.

Now I would be remiss if I didn't take the last few minutes to talk about health care. It's a pressing issue and one that both Congress and the Montana Legislature will have to grapple with. Thanks to your good work last session Montana expanded Medicaid to over 60,000 hardworking people. For the first time in their lives these people were able to afford health coverage, you should be commended for that.

Repeal. Delay. Replace. Repeal and replace. Repeal and Delay. Obamacare. Trumpcare.

Here are the facts: The health care industry accounts for over 52,000 jobs in Montana. Health care in Montana is a \$4 billion industry. If Congress repeals the Affordable Care Act: Coverage would be ripped away from the 60,000 folks you gave hope to just two years ago. Montana's economy would lose \$3.1 Billion—with a capital "B"—between 2019 and 2023. It would add \$350 Billion to the deficit. We would lose 8,200 jobs in 2019 alone. And

rural areas would feel it the most, hospitals in towns like Culbertson, Hamilton, and my home town of Big Sandy would potentially have to board up their doors. Working together to fix the Affordable Care Act is just good business.

I've been around the state and the message is clear: People don't want Congress taking away their health care. Right now we have an incredible opportunity to find bipartisan solutions that can make health care more affordable for middle class families. But instead of having that important conversation, Congress is on the cusp of repealing all the progress we've made.

I want to be clear. I know premiums are rising. We cannot settle for any situation where middle class families cannot afford health insurance. I know that. But let's work together to keep the accountability up, and the costs down. Repealing the ACA without a plan for what comes next will not lower costs. Our families' health care is too important to throw it into chaos. We need to look before we leap. And we can't throw the baby out with the bath water. We need to be working to provide affordability to families and certainty to the rural communities that rely on our hospitals. I know we can find common ground to deliver that to Montana.

In Montana, there is far more that unites us than divides us. We can all agree that Montana raises the best agriculture products in the world. We can all agree that on a summer afternoon we'd rather be on the river than cooped up in an office. And we can all agree that Montana is home to the hardest working men and women in the world. We owe it to these hardworking men and women to come together to build a stronger Montana.

Together, we can build stronger roads and bridges. We can build a 21st Century infrastructure. We can build the quality products to supply folks at home and abroad. We can build a business friendly environment that encourages innovation and investment. We can build a more efficient workforce to meet the needs of our changing economy. We can build an energy sector that doesn't mortgage our future for today's profits. We can build a health care system that works for everyone, not just big insurance or drug companies. And we can build a stronger, better Montana for our next generation.

Good luck in the coming weeks.

God bless you, God bless Montana, and God bless this great country.

REMEMBERING TIM MITCHELL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my deep sorrow on the passing of Tim Mitchell. Through his absolute dedication to this institution and the special kind of person he was, Tim made the Senate a better place.

Tim served as the assistant secretary for the minority. As Senator Reid shared during his September remarks in celebration of Tim's 25 years of exemplary service, Tim began his career in the Senate working for Senator Don Riegle, Jr., of Michigan.

He later worked for Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota and the Democratic Policy & Communications Committee before joining the Democratic floor staff in 2001. Tim also took night classes at Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law—an impressive feat.

The Senate often calls for long days and longer nights. Debates on the floor

may get heated, rollcall votes may drag on for hours, but Tim always kept a calm temperament and kind demeanor. He was soft spoken, but firm—not an easy feat while juggling the Members of this body's unique needs and passions.

He was simply the best at what he did, and he made a real difference in how the Senate worked. The value of his service is incalculable.

To Tim's family—his wife, Alicia, and his 11-year-old son, Ben—I am so sorry for your loss. I am forever grateful that you shared Tim with us for so many years.

I echo Senator Reid's previous remarks: Tim's time here changed the Senate and this country for the better.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalist essays written by Vermont high school students as part of the seventh annual State of the Union essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

FINN ABBEY, MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH
SCHOOL FRESHMAN (FINALIST)

Our country has faced many issues in the past, but today we face one of our greatest challenges. Division. We have forgotten to care for each other; forgotten that we are only strong with each other. We are growing too uncompassionate, too distrustful of each other. We can and must remember that we are not enriched by the success of one person, but rather the success of many. We prosper not with the defeat of others, but with their success. And keeping with the philosophy that we must succeed together, we must work together on smaller challenges.

Our country needs a system that not only doesn't punish the poor for their very existence, but offers every person the chance to better themselves. The hope that your children will have a better life than you has long been a staple of the American dream. To accomplish this, we need to create a liveable wage of \$15, and create a progressive tax system that leaves the poor with more and takes fairly from those who can afford it. We cannot be satisfied in the splendor of ourselves and people like us when our fellow Americans are living in the streets.

We must also institute universal health care. This will involve higher taxes, of course, but, combined with strict laws about pharmaceutical pricing and a fair tax system, will ensure that our country is healthy and our middle class stays strong. No one should ever have to choose between food and medicine. We need change.

We also must guarantee everyone the right to vote, and that their votes count. Time and time again voter ID laws have suppressed the African-American vote. We cannot say we are equal when we pass laws with the purpose of lowering voter turnout.

We also have to remove another recent mistake in election law: Citizens United. We cannot accept catering to special interests as a side effect of democracy; we must recognize it as a barrier to a fairer system. We must put the redrawing of congressional districts in the hands of independent commissions to prevent gerrymandering. Anything

less is a conflict of interest and a mockery of democracy. We need to replace first past the post with ranked choice voting, allowing for a greater variety of candidates. This will serve as another booth in the marketplace of ideas.

To many these goals are mountains too tall to climb. But in America, we don't know how to give up. It's what makes us great. The idea that if we want change, we'll fight until we reach it. It's what got African-Americans equality under the law. It's what got women the right to vote. It's what has brought equal love to our entire nation. And it's what led to independence for the plucky colonists who took on the world because they thought it could be better. Throughout our history, all we've needed is an idea, an ideal, and each other. After all, out of many, we are one.

EMILY BALLOU, SOUTH ROYALTON HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR (FINALIST)

It is both a privilege and an honor to live in a nation where I have the right to speak my mind without the fear of failure or retribution, where liberty of expression is celebrated, and diverging views, though challenged, are entitled to develop according to their merit.

The greatest problem we have is that the people of our country lack compassion. We lack empathy. We need to integrate our passions instead of separating them. Love should trump hate, but it seems as of late that that is reversed. We must renew our nation, and to do so, we must stop the ignorance of the public. We must end the bigoted, chauvinistic, and discriminatory ideologies and mindsets of our people.

What we have in common is more important than the differences used to divide us. Groups of like-minded people acting in a similar fashion are not a new phenomenon, but the engagement of these groups has become dedicated to excluding the expression of other views.

What makes a country great is not how rich the monetary funds of the upper class is, but how well its most vulnerable citizens are treated. This is why we must start early and teach the next generation to kindness and to love.

When someone of power misuses his or her status to bully those more vulnerable, their actions are desensitized. This disrespect incites more discord which invites both fear and hatred into the minds of all ages. The very young feel no hatred. Currently, not all adolescents are being taught the importance of tolerance and empathy in their homes, schools, or in public. These lessons must begin in their earliest years of schooling before they acquire biases from around them and their beliefs are negatively impacted.

The vernacular must include words of kindness, not derogatory terms or racially-charged slurs. No matter what an individual's values are, they should not value the discrimination and hatred associated with these words. Silence is compliance. The cycle of history will continue to repeat itself unless people begin to empathize with all. If one wishes to "Make America Great Again," hate should not be the weapon of choice. We must be more inclusive and accepting of the diversity in which this nation has prided and built itself on, for change begins with ourselves.

Love does trump hate. Although we adhere to the flaws in society, we must not. We must instill hope into those of the coming generations. There is hope that our world will see peace. There is hope that our world will be preserved. There is hope for change. We are "a nation of the people, by the people, for the people that shall not perish from the Earth," where people, no matter their

race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender, should take comfort in. We are the great United States of America, and the day we forget that, we will cease to exist, because despite current circumstances, the world is not entirely lost if everyone resists, together.

BILLY BENDER, HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL
SOPHOMORE (FINALIST)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of the 115th Congress and Distinguished Guests,

As Americans we face many difficulties, but two are of particular concern: one is a challenge to our world, the other to our republic. We can and must do more to stop global warming, and we can and must get big money out of politics.

Climate Change is real. The scientific debate is over. We have already begun to see its effects in the United States. Large sections of the country have experienced severe droughts and wildfires, hurricanes have been more violent, and our summers are becoming dangerously hot in the south. Internationally, long-term droughts are causing malnutrition, threatening coastal cities, and creating climate refugees. This is real, it is urgent, it is a direct result of the actions of humans, and its impact will be felt disproportionately by the most vulnerable peoples on our planet. We caused it, and we can stop it. We have a responsibility toward our children, our grandchildren, and all of the future inhabitants of our planet.

Our government needs to invest heavily in large scale clean energy infrastructure projects. We need to renew and add to the existing subsidies on renewable energy to make solar or wind a viable financial option for homeowners and businesses. We need to invest heavily in clean energy research and stop subsidizing fossil fuels. When renewables like solar, wind and hydro power are cheaper than oil, then the massive oil companies will have no choice but to become energy companies instead of oil companies and build dams, wind farms and solar fields. We will no longer have to tolerate the risks of nuclear energy.

However, to achieve the goal of powering our nation with renewable energy, we need to take the influence of huge, anonymous donors out of American politics. Citizens United has allowed huge corporations to funnel millions of dollars into electing politicians who regard them favorably. The fossil fuel industry is hugely profitable, and the millionaires and billionaires who control them want to delay and diminish the impact of renewables on their bottom line. Their huge sums of money give them a massively disproportionate voice in elections, allowing them to create Super PACs which will ensure the continued existence of dangerous, damaging practices like fracking.

Climate change is a critical problem facing our nation and our world, but it will be difficult to take the bold steps necessary to mitigate its effects without first eliminating the advantage that billionaires have in our elections. It is time to take large scale legislative and judicial steps to eliminate the outsized voice of the extremely wealthy and save our planet for all who come after us.

SIMON BUPP-CHICKERING, BELLOWS FALLS
UNION HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR (FINALIST)

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."—Martin Luther King Jr.

A nation that neglects to confront and eliminate injustice is no true defender of its people's rights. Due to the death penalty's inherent inability to be more than state sponsored revenge, its exorbitant cost, and the lack of statistical evidence showing it does anything to stop murder, the death penalty is an antiquated and medieval punish-

ment that has no place in a modern democracy.

One of the most common arguments brought up by proponents of the death penalty is the idea that enforcing the death penalty acts as a deterrent for other criminals. However, this argument fails to account for the fact that the vast majority of murderers aren't executed, less than one percent. In addition, 88 percent of criminologists, experts who study crime for a living, refute the idea that the death penalty works as a deterrent. Furthermore, as the South accounts for 80 percent of all executions in the United States, if the death penalty did act as deterrence, then those states would have the lowest rates of murder. However, the South holds the country's highest murder rate, and the North, which accounts for less than 1 percent of the country's executions, has the lowest murder rate.

The death penalty as it is practiced today is simply a tool for revenge, misguidedly used in an attempt to help grieving families. The finality of the punishment destroys any hope of reflection, apology, or forgiveness, thus eliminating any chance of true healing. Additionally, revenge is an emotional response to tragedy, and the judicial system in America should be about providing just and emotionally unbiased decisions. Instead of perpetuating a cycle of violence, the United States government should promote restorative justice, which promotes rehabilitation and the improvement and bettering society rather than resort to base human emotions in response to tragedy.

In order to prevent this outdated and pointless practice of state-funded murder from damaging our justice system any further, the death penalty must be abolished nationwide, and those on death role should have their sentences commuted to life in prison without parole. In a modern, civilized society, there is no place for such a horrific punishment. Most other enlightened nations around the world have removed the death penalty from their judicial systems. Instead of remaining among the questionable company of nations such as North Korea, America must prove that it understands the egregious error in killing as punishment for killing.

Ultimately, the fact that the United States still uses the death penalty reveals a fundamental lack of ethical maturity in our nation, and is a mark of shame to Americans who want to believe that the country they live in has evolved from the barbaric practices of antiquity along with the rest of the civilized world.●

TRIBUTE TO MILTON BRONSTEIN

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, Mr. Milton Bronstein, a lifelong public servant, labor leader, and great friend to me, today celebrates his 100th birthday.

Milton served in many capacities during his more than three decades of service as an employee of the State of Rhode Island. In addition, he was an active workers' organizer, leading Rhode Island's AFSCME chapter, Council 94, as its first president and eventually becoming the retiree chapter's vice president until retiring just last year at age 99.

Those who have been fortunate enough to work alongside Milton during his State service or to benefit under his tenure at Council 94 describe him as a strong, dedicated leader and mentor. Current labor leaders say Milton's involvement helped strengthen